

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is earnestly requested.

Claims 1, 7-8, 11, and 15 have been amended:

Claims 1 and 4-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Krautz et al. (US 4,334,341). Claims 2-3, 11-17, and 19-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Krautz in view of Latella et al. (US 5,738,954). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Examiner notes that the Terminal Disclaimer filed on August 25, 2006 has been disapproved because there was no authorization to charge a specified Deposit Account. Applicant's representative notes that specific authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 502290 was provided in both the transmittal of the response and the response itself dated August 25, 2006. Accordingly, entry and consideration of the previously filed terminal disclaimer is respectfully requested.

Krautz relates to a buckle for a safety belt. Referring to Fig. 1, Krautz discloses a single spring to urge the swivel latches inwards to the guide passage where the swivel latches snap into indentations into the tongue. See also, Krautz, col. 2: 25-27.

Independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to recite "a plurality of locking members, each having a bias spring" or "a first and a second bias spring." These amendments find support in the specification, for example, at paragraph 0022 ("Locking members 150 are spring-loaded via a corresponding pair of transverse elastic members 300, as generally shown in Fig. 5.") Krautz does not teach the limitations of the amended claims, but only discloses a single bias spring.

As set forth in MPEP 2131, to anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim. Since, as discussed above, every element of independent claims 1 and 11 is not taught by Krautz, applicant submits that these

claims are not anticipated by Krautz and are therefore allowable. Additionally, claims 2-10, 12-17, and 19-20 would be patentable at least by virtue of their dependence upon their respective patentable independent claims.

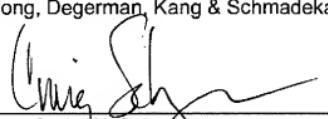
In addition, regarding 2-3, 11-17, and 19-20, Latella also does not teach "a plurality of locking members, each having a bias spring" or "a first and a second bias spring." As set forth in MPEP 2143, to show a *prima facie* case for obviousness, all the prior art references, either individually or combined, must teach all the claim limitations. Neither Krautz nor Latella teach or suggest a plurality of bias springs, and applicant submits that a *prima facie* case for obviousness has not been shown and that claims 2-3, 11-17, and 19-20 are not obvious over the cited prior art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain at issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned at (213) 623-2221.

Respectfully submitted,
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